

Philippine Senate in session at Manila. The Philippine Legislature is made up wholly of native Filipinos.

THAT there are two sides to every question is of course a truism but it, like most truisms, is subject to considerable qualification.

That is certainly the case with regard to the question of the future of the Philippines. There are not only two, but twice and perhaps four times two, sides to that question which before long must be decided. But here's the difficulty: There is only one outstanding, concrete, organized, affirmative side—that is the Filipinos' side. And therein lies a confession.

The writer originally suggested to the Editor of THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT that he be permitted to write two articles on the subject, one giving an authoritative view as to what the Filipinos really want and the other an authoritative view as to why they should not get most all they want or shouldn't get it any time in the near future.

Quite to the astonishment of the writer it was easy to procure and present the first view. All that was necessary was to walk a block from his office, take a ride in an elevator and enter a group of offices where brown-skinned girls tapped busily on American typewriters and suave brown-skinned men sat at desks and, in excellent English, answered every question put to them. The place is the Washington headquarters of the Philippine Commission. It could be termed a junta, and is perhaps the only one of the kind ever set up.

If you can imagine, as existing under the old order in Europe, a Polish junta in St. Petersburg or Berlin, you can appreciate the oddity of a well-organized establishment being located in Washington for the purpose of agitating the separation of the Philippines from American control.

At the commission's Washington office or junta every contingency comprised in the writer's undertaking had been anticipated. An interview? Pick your authority and we'll put you in immediate touch with him. Facts? Here are piles of them, printed, cataloged, arranged, that bear on every angle of the Philippines. Pictures? Here are a carload from which to select; and through it all not an unfriendly or uncordial word or hint or inflection regarding America and Americans.

"A friendly affair it has been for twenty years," they say, "and a friendly affair we want it to be until settled—and afterward."

"It is our ambition," declared a Filipino leader to the writer, "to join with you in writing a new precedent into the annals of nations—one marking the setting up of independence for a subject people without bloodshed or so much as rancor or bad feeling."

So it was delightfully easy to get the Filipino viewpoint, at least as it is expressed in this country.

But the other side? Therein developed unexpected difficulties, for no group, as far as could be found, espouses the other side or sides. In Washington there could be found no one who desired openly to take issue with the Philippine Commission, and had any one holding contrary views been willing to put them forth the expression would have been only an individual one. Neither could anybody point

The Philippines—A Confession

By AARON HARDY ULM

to any one in or away from Washington who could speak authoritatively for the other side.

Clearly the opposition to Philippine independence, as interpreted by authoritative Filipinos—and undoubtedly there is opposition—is at present dormant. Anyway, no trail of organized or concerted opposition could be found in Washington.

This fact is due perhaps in the main to the Jones Act, which gave autonomy to the Filipinos three years ago. Since that time American population in the Philippines has dwindled. The "days of the empire," when Americans ran everything in the Philippines, are now but a pleasing reminiscence. The thousands who used to hold political positions there have dwindled to a few hundred, and those that remain are in most part subordinate to Filipinos. When the Filipinos took over the government most of the Americans left and no obstacles were put in their way by the government. A few remained and joined the small group of their countrymen who were engaged in business there. Today there are only about 6,000 Americans in all the Philippines. Others who used to have vital interest in continued American supremacy, now, with that interest gone, have only opinions with no incentive to press them.

And those Americans who remain in the Philippines, I am told, are disinclined actively to oppose Filipino ambitions. Philippine autonomy didn't result in the disasters which many of them predicted. In fact, the Philippines have prospered as never before since the Jones Act became effective. Native government hasn't proved as mechanically efficient as American rule—and no reasonable person could have so expected—but it has operated on the whole satisfactorily even to American business men with material interests at stake.

Possibly there is another factor, namely the American sense of sportsmanship. As long as complete independence for the Filipinos lay in the balance and was a subject of discussion, so to speak, the interested

American, with views contrary to those of the Filipinos, was aggressive in advising the withholding of a grant of independence. But the Jones Act, enacted by Congress, cleared up all doubt as to the position of the United States Government by stating, in its preamble, that "it has always been the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence as soon as stable government can be established therein."

That act amounts to a solemn pledge, regarding which there can be no equivocation as in the case of preceding statements of policy toward the Philippines, on the part of the United States.

And of course every American, whether or not he favored making it, expects the pledge to be carried out.

Hence there is very little ground on which those who believe the Filipinos are still unprepared for complete independence can stand. There are three directions in which they can move or argue. One is indefinite delay in making the final separation; another is in limiting or circumscribing the separation, and the other is to influence Filipino opinion in favor of continued American control.

None of these appeal very much to those having more than abstract interest in the question.

"If the Filipinos are to be given complete independence, it would be as well to give it to them now as at any time in future," said one who opposed the Jones Act.

"And there is no reason why we should attach strings to the grant of independence and every reason why we should not. If we establish a protectorate over the Philippines we merely continue our obligations, and increase our risks, without the safeguards that direct rule affords."

"As far as the Filipinos coming around to view American overlordship favorably, that's beyond the possible, at least until they demonstrate, if they should, their incapacity for self-rule and self-protection."

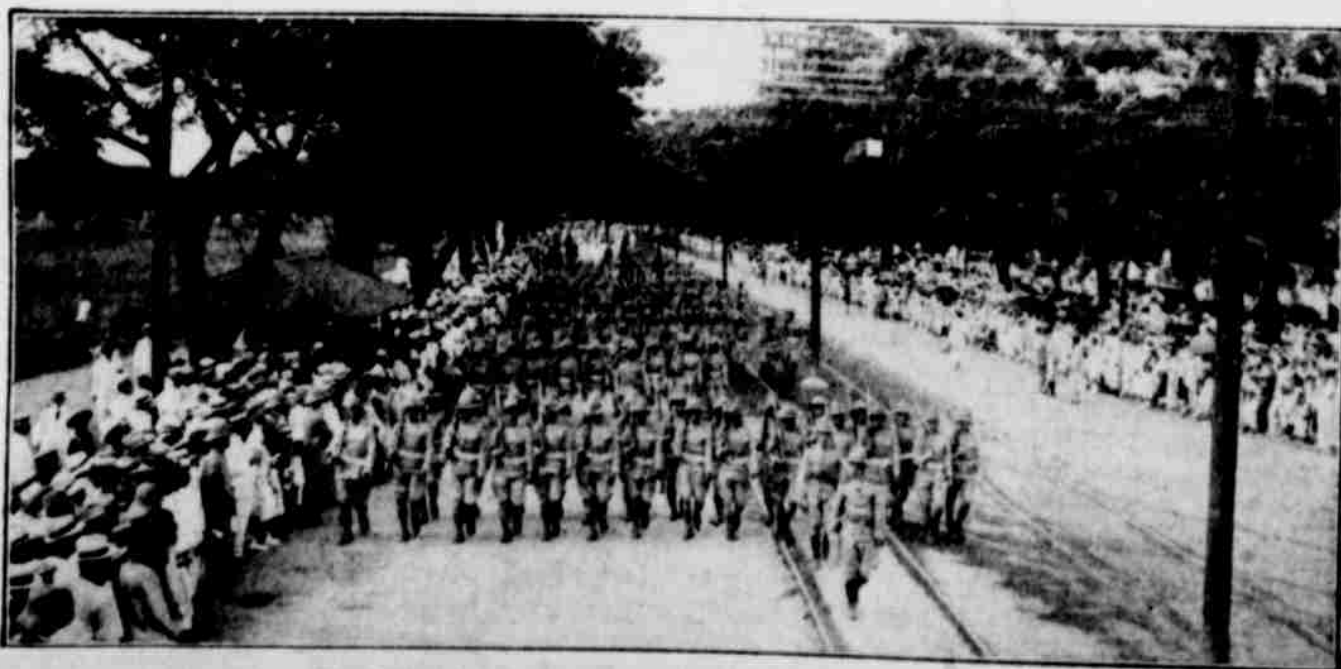
"Hence the best thing to do is to let them go scot free and show by actual experiment whether they can safely sail the international seas."

But the problem isn't so simple as that. Those Americans who are familiar with what the United States has done in the Philippines are justly proud of our record there, a record which even the Filipinos are among the readiest to praise.

In all the history of colonization, there is nothing to compare with that of the United States in that one of our possessions.

It happens that the writer was a member of the military force that put down the Filipino insurrection and began that marvelous record of pacification and rehabilitation which is veritably the wonder of history.

Twenty years ago the Philippines were virtually a wild land. All that the Spaniards had done during a rule of three centuries was to develop Manila and a few other cities and towns, build a few military roads and some superb bridges, and extend the Catholic religion. Except in the matter of religion, the Spaniards never regarded the Filipinos other than as



The Philippine Constabulary in the fourth liberty loan parade.